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# NARRATIVES FROM THE WAR

IN CHARGE OF

ELISABETH ROBINSON SCOVIL

Colonel Sir Berkeley Moynihan, consulting surgeon to the British Army, in a speech at the Clinical Congress of Surgeons of North America, held in Chicago, said: "In the opinion of those best able to judge, the turning point of the war came in November, 1914, on that memorable day after the battle of the Marne when the second (first?) battle of Ypres was fought out. The English Army on that occasion was a thin line, when a man could not, by reaching out both his arms, touch his nearest neighbor. Between that single line and the coast there was nothing in reserve—everything was put in that line. To that line was supplied all the ammunition they had, which would not now be considered enough for a poor morning's work, 150 rounds per man, with four machine guns to each battalion. That line for four nights and three days was bombarded unceasingly, not so much with the idea that those men should be killed, as that they should be prevented from having sleep. On the morning of the 11th the Germans made their attack on that poor, thin, miserable line of weary, begrimed, mud-stained, cheerful "Tommies"—and what was the attack? It was made by the best troops that Germany had at her disposal in the early days of the war, and they were magnificent troops of whom any nation in the world would justly be proud. The odds were never less than five to one, sometimes seventeen to one, and our men were so weary they leaned their heads against the parapet, nodding in their sleep, so weary they could not see anything to hit until it got thirty or forty yards away, and along that line the German dead were found heaped up seven, nine, ten and eleven deep. The attack failed and that thin line held, and that was all that stood at that moment between civilization and disaster to the world."

The war seems to have been carried into Bible times. Gaza, the ancient city of the Philistines, whose gates Samson pulled down, has been taken by the British under General Allenby. Beersheba has fallen; fifteen enemy guns being captured there, 26 officers, including two battalion commanders, and 418 men. Jerusalem is threatened.

The first losses of the American troops occurred on the Rhine-Marne Canal. They were holding a small portion of the French front and in a German raid had a few men killed and wounded and 12 prisoners taken.

It is stated that the troops of the Entente Allies are wearing silk as a protective against blood poisoning from wounds. Huge shipments of American silk fabrics have been sent abroad since the beginning of the war.

The British Admiralty announces that a successful air attack in the vicinity of Constantinople was accomplished by a large British bombing

aeroplane which flew from England to a British base in the Mediterranean in a series of eight flights. The stopping places included Lyons and Rome and the total distance covered was nearly two thousand miles. The machine was actually in the air thirty-one hours.

London evening papers are delivered a few hours after publication by aviators to the men on the French front.

In the accounts of the retreat on the Italian front it is stated that the worst rigors were endured by a party from the British hospital at Versa. The lorries for evacuation did not come, so the stretcher cases were put in ambulance wagons of the British Red Cross and brought back. The whole party turned up safely in spite of the fact that they marched day and night in the rain, with so little food that they picked up scraps of bread from the road to eat. They arrived in good condition, though some were patients convalescing from typhoid, for whom any reasonable doctor would have pronounced such treatment fatal.

Dr. Page, the United States Ambassador, said in a speech at Edinburgh, recently, that there will be more university men in the American Army than ever went into battle before from any country.

Poland is bleeding from many wounds, for her people and especially her children are in a helplessly destitute state, not only homeless but in need of the barest necessities of life. Those who have read *When the Prussians Came to Poland*, by Laura Turczynowicz, the American wife of a gallant Pole, at one time inspector-in-chief of the Sanitary Engineers in the Russian Army, have a faint idea of the awful conditions prevailing in that unhappy country. Paderewski is at the head of a relief fund which has rendered splendid service.

An escaped Canadian prisoner, who has returned home only to re-enlist, relates an instance of the paucity of information which the enemy extracts from prisoners. German commander, showing a map, "Point out the position of your unit on this map." Prisoner, "I don't know how to read maps, we don't have them on our side." German commander, "How many machine guns are there in your section?" "I don't know exactly, I think about a million and a half."

A Canadian officer says in a private letter: "The elements of risk in general actions are often less than in many daily occupations of the troops. Take the famous Menin Road, whatever happens, stores have to go up, thousands of transport parties there have been shelled and comparatively few have no casualties to report at the end of the journey. If part of the force is laid out, the rest must go on, passing their fallen comrades, and often on the last trip bringing back the bodies of one's own particular pals."